

Captain Waterman of Duxbury was at the helm of this ship. Can you read the flags?

DUXBURY SHIPBUILDING

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Types of Vessels

At their best Duxbury vessels were no ocean greyhounds to look at. They were short and thick through the waist and hips - to give the word a nautical twist - but they were sturdily and honestly built, living up to the good reputation of the packet ships for outlasting the swift fancy Clippers. In the old custom-house records most of them are set down as square-sterned, without figureheads, with possibly one in 50 showing a coquettish elliptic rear. More often, though still not common, was the decorative touch of the figurehead, in most cases literally a head - almost always feminine. The ship, Powhattan, owned by Thomas Herrick and Nathaniel Winsor Jr., more appropriately bore that of an Indian chief. It was understandable that the large square-rigged vessels thought their lordly tonnage entitled them to such adornments, but Ahira Wadsworth and James Southworth Jr., thought their 71 foot schooner, Catherine, equally entitled to the honor. She was I think the only one of her day and class to have one.

Even the largest Duxbury ships were well under 200 feet in length. The biggest that ever hit the waters here was officially registered thus: Hope, ship. Built

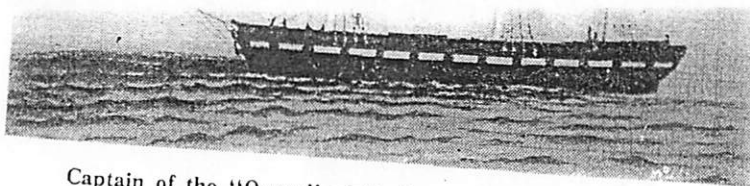
1841. Duxbury. Length, 159 feet 3 inches; breadth 34 feet, 9 3/4 inches; depth 17 feet, 4 5/8 inches; tonnage 880. Two decks, 3 masts, square stern, no galleries, a billethead. Master, Truman Soule. Owner, Ezra Weston. A billethead is an ornamental carving frequently and economically used as a substitute for a figurehead.

Briggs and barks were usually somewhat under 100 feet in length, schooners running from 50-75 feet. These of course were the early vessels. Small compared with those that came later, it must be remembered they were in the nature of pioneers, built to fit their waters and the purses of their owners, in the majority of cases men of very moderate means. They did well and bravely what they were called upon to do and laid the foundation for many a comfortable fortune.

When the vessels from the more northerly deep-water ports began to stretch their keels even the smallest of them, the schooners, sometimes could show as much length, or even more, than Weston's full-rigged ship "Hope." Newburyport's "Cox and Green" was longer by 5 full feet. The "Lucy E. Friend" from the same port was 147 feet long; the George D. Edmonds of Boston, 158.7 feet. All of the fleet

family-one held the "George D. Edmonds," 38 the "Cox and Green" and the Customs put down 23 against the "Maud Snare" of Bangor with, "balance of owners unknown." And so it went.

Such crafts were as impersonal as department stores or coal mines. Many investors never saw the vessels of which they were part owners. At Duxbury the contact was close and personal between vessel and owners, between vessel and all the town indeed, which shared vicariously in its luck, good or bad. The very names of many show how intimate were the partnerships: "Two Brothers," owned by the Drew family; the "Three Josephs," Joseph Cushman, Joseph Drew and Joseph White; the "Eight Sons," Levi Sampson and David Cushman; the "Four Brothers," Seth Sprague; and all the "Two Friends," owned by Ezra Weston Jr., and Abraham Barker, of Philadelphia.



Captain of the "Oneco" of Duxbury was Captain Drew